HYDERABAD

Hyderabad floods: Man survives after 4-hour struggle in water

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‘The decaying body of my brother was found 13 km away’

After struggling to keep himself from **drowning in the October 13 torrent**, Mohammed Abdul Taher Qureshi emerged in Falaknuma, four hours later, exhausted and with no clothes on his back.

"Somehow I caught hold of a wall and pulled myself out of the water. The clothes that I was wearing came off in the strong current. I saw a sack nearby and covered myself with it. I realised I was swept away from my house in Ali Nagar to somewhere in Falaknuma, three or four kilometres away. The realisation that I was struggling in the water for four hours dawned on me after I heard the *fajr azaan* around 5.15 a.m. During this time, I kept shouting for help. I later found out that Chandrayangutta Additional Inspector Prasad Varma tried to save me by pushing a pipe in my direction, but it slipped from my hands. I was stuck at one place and at another, somebody tried to rescue me," Mr Qureshi, who belongs to the Arab tribe Al Gureshi, says.

He lifts his loose, grey trousers, and winces in pain, to show his shins. Crimson scratch marks criss-cross over green and purple bruises. His fatigued knees and thighs show signs of intense struggle.

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Nagar, 13 km away. In fact, he tried to save me before being swept away. Around 1 a.m., we tried to move our family into his house which is across the road so that they would be safe. But the water took them away," he says. Mr Qureshi's son-in-law Mohammed Omar, a lawyer, interjects to explain that while the survivor's house is single-storey, Quddus Qureshi's house is a ground plus three structure.

While Mr Qureshi has buried five of his family members, three others – M.A. Wajid Qureshi, M.A. Wasay Qureshi and M.A. Wahab Qureshi – are still missing.

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00:00 / 01:08

Among those who were killed was his daughter-in-law, Humera Farzana. His son M.A. Wasif Qureshi, is now in a West Asian country. Tuesday, when tragedy struck, was their wedding anniversary.

A retired Road Transport Corporation employee, Mr Qureshi explains that his son Wajid, who drowned, was working with a tech giant, even as he describes him as the 'backbone' of the family. He is now worried about his wife Nishat Fatima's medical expenses.

He has appealed to the authorities to help him retrieve bodies of those who are missing.

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